

OUTBOARD MOTOR SUPPORT DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The invention pertains to supporting an outboard motor when it is mounted to a boat and placed in an up position. More particularly, it pertains to an outboard motor support device.

Fishing is one of the most popular recreational activities in North America. There are over 30 million anglers in the United States.

Over the past 25 years, there have been significant advances in fishing techniques and equipment. Magazines devoted to fishing in general, and even to specific species of fish have become popular and successful. Television programs about fishing and demonstrating fishing techniques and equipment are seen weekly. Sports and outdoor shows and expositions typically feature seminars by leading professional anglers; and video tapes demonstrating fishing techniques are proved to be popular.

Professional tournament fishing has steadily grown in popularity over the past two decades. Professional bass tournaments featuring large purses are conducted throughout the United States and are the subject of regular television programs. More recently, professional walleye tournaments have seen a similar rise in popularity.

Tournament fishing has led to many improvements in fishing techniques and technology as the professional anglers are constantly seeking to obtain a winning edge over competitors. In tournament walleye fishing, there has been a continuing trend toward larger boats with larger outboard motors. Where a 16 foot boat with a 40 or 50 horsepower tiller-controlled outboard motor was commonplace 10 years ago, tournament walleye fishing boats now are typically about 18 to 20 feet in length with an outboard motor in the range of 150 to 225 horsepower. These large boats and motors are needed to travel long distances on large bodies of water, since most professional walleye tournaments plays on large bodies of water in the Northern United States or Canada, such as the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, the Missouri River, Lake Winnebago in Wisconsin, and Mille Lacs and Lake of the Woods in Minnesota.

A tournament walleye fishing boat is typically equipped with two other motors in addition to the main outboard motor: a bow mounted electric trolling motor and an auxiliary or "kicker" outboard motor mounted on the transom alongside the main outboard.

The electric trolling motor is used for precise boat positioning and movement. The electric trolling motor is quiet, which can be an advantage in shallow water. On the other hand, electric trolling motors have less thrust than either the main outboard or the kicker.

The kicker motor has become popular as trolling has become a widely used and very effective way of catching walleyes. The kicker motor is generally less than 20 horsepower, with 9.9 horsepower being the most common outboard motor used as a kicker. These smaller outboard motors were originally designed for smaller fishing boats, rather than as an auxiliary motor for a much larger boat.

The kicker motor can be used in a forward direction to troll at precise slow speeds (typically less than 3 miles per hour and in some cases less than 1 mile per hour). The kicker motor can also be used to "back troll", a technique in which the kicker motor is driven in reverse. This results in the boat moving very slowly in a reverse direction, or simply holding its place against current or waves in order to allow the angler to maintain a position over a particular underwater structure.

The increasing use of kicker motors, however, has led to problems. When the boat is being driven at high speed from one location to another, the kicker motor must be tilted in its up position so that the lower unit of the kicker motor is out of the water. This avoids damage to the kicker motor, and also prevents the associated drag which would otherwise occur. However, when the boat is traveling at higher speeds, the pounding and bouncing of the boat across the water creates a stress on the bracket of the kicker motor, which can cause the bracket to break. This is especially true when the boat is running through swells. As the boat comes down hard from the top of a swell, the kicker motor's lower unit is snapped up pointing almost straight out from the transom of the boat. Then, when the boat bottoms out, the lower unit smashes down placing an extraordinary amount of force or stress on the bracket. These forces and stresses have been known to break the bracket which secures the kicker motor to the transom, and in some cases they have even broken a portion of the transom off of the boat where the bracket of the kicker is secured.

Designers have attempted to re-engineer the bracket to increase its strength. However, these efforts have been unsuccessful in overcoming the stresses associated with boats running through swells. Thus, there exists no known device to adequately support and secure a kicker motor in an up position while traveling over water at higher speeds.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention is a device and method to support and secure an outboard motor to a transom of a boat. The device comprises a tie down bracket, a support and a tie down strap. The tie down bracket is secured to the transom of the boat while the support is rotatably mounted to the motor. The support is mounted such that when the motor is in an up position the support can rotate about its mounting point to contact and support the motor. The tie down strap is then passed behind the motor and is secured to the tie down bracket. The motor is then secured in the up position between the support and the tie down strap which displaces a portion of the stress that would otherwise be placed on the mounting bracket of the motor and prevents the generation of forces or stresses by preventing movement of the motor while the boat is traveling at higher speeds or through semi-rough water from another power source.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a top view of a boat utilizing an outboard motor support device to secure and support an auxiliary motor.

FIG. 2 is a fragmentary view of a preferred embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 3 is a perspective starboard quarter view of a boat using a preferred embodiment of the invention with an outboard motor in an up position.

FIG. 4 is a perspective starboard quarter view of a boat having an outboard motor which is supported and secured in the up position by a preferred embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In FIG. 1, a top view of boat 10 is shown. Boat 10 has a bow 12, a starboard side 14, a port side 16, a starboard quarter 18 and a port quarter 20. The boat 10 is powered by main outboard motor 22 and includes auxiliary outboard or "kicker" motor 24. The main outboard motor 22 and the kicker motor 24 are secured to a transom 26 of the boat 10. Electric trolling motor 28 is mounted on bow 12.

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Outboard motor support device 50 does not allow kicker motor 24 to bounce up and down or tilt further forward and